

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

ENGLISH 130 – SHORT FICTION WRITING I

3 hours lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

The first in a four-course sequence, this class is designed to familiarize students with the study, analysis, and application of fundamental tools, techniques, and forms used by established and contemporary authors of fiction. By composing and submitting original short fiction, students learn to use the writers' workshop to develop their skills as critics and writers of fiction. Students have opportunities for recognition and public readings of their own work. Students may enroll in this class without having to enroll in the other courses in the sequence.

Prerequisite

None

Recommended Preparation

“C” grade or higher or “Pass” in ENGL 126 or equivalent

Course Content

- 1) Invention, composition, and revision of short fiction amounting to approximately 12,000 words per semester.
- 2) Fundamental elements and techniques of the craft of short fiction, including point of view, setting, character, theme, narration and plot, language and style, and structure.
- 3) Written and oral critical commentary of peers' original short fiction.
- 4) A diversity of short fiction by emerging, established, and contemporary writers, in print and/or online chapbooks, books, anthologies, literary magazines, and journals.
- 5) In-class writing exercises.
- 6) Critical essays on the discourse of fiction writing.
- 7) Strategies for performatively reading short fiction.
- 8) Practice in assembling a portfolio of short fiction.
- 9) Introduction to publishing.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Distinguish, both orally and in writing, the fundamental tools, techniques, and forms used by professional practitioners of short fiction writing, including plot construction, point of view, setting, description, characterization, dialogue, and theme.
- 2) Identify and employ basic techniques of invention.
- 3) Write short fiction utilizing fundamental tools, techniques, and forms.
- 4) Evaluate benefits of criticism of their own work and demonstrate application in consequent revisions.
- 5) Develop ability to critique other students' short fiction, both orally and in writing.
- 6) Cultivate aesthetic criteria for short fiction.
- 7) Practice performatively reading their own writing.
- 8) Practice competency in college-level grammar, punctuation, and mechanics used in short fiction writing.

Method of Evaluation

A grading system will be established by the instructor and implemented uniformly. Grades will be based on demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation, one of which must be essay exams, skills demonstration or, where appropriate, the symbol system.

- 1) Student writing and revision of short fiction.
- 2) Participation in writers' workshop, both orally and in writing.
- 3) Participation in class discussion, and writing exercises such as modeling based on published authors
- 4) Completion of short fiction portfolio (including exercises, drafts and revisions) as a final project.
- 5) Performative reading of original works composed for the class, presented as part of a final examination.

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart Classroom

Method of Instruction

- 1) Lecture by instructor, visiting writers, and media
- 2) Workshopping, reviewing, and reading activities in small or large groups
- 3) Discussion and writing exercises based on tools, techniques, and forms of short fiction
- 4) Discussion and reading aloud of short fiction by emerging, traditional, and/or contemporary authors
- 5) Individual conferences

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) Reading and studying of work by emerging, established and/or contemporary short fiction practitioners.
- 2) Composing and revising works of short fiction.
- 3) Reading and writing critiques of classmates' short stories.
- 4) Researching material for works of short fiction.
- 5) Craft and imitation exercises.
- 6) Attending and/or participating in campus and community literary events and readings.
- 7) Submitting manuscripts to the Cuyamaca College literary journal, *The Cuyamaca Creative*, as well as researching online and print publication opportunities.

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative example):
 - a. Bradburn, Richard. *Self-Editing for Self-Publishers: Incorporating—A Style Guide for Fiction*. Reen Publishing, 2020.
 - b. Burroway, Janet, and Elizabeth Stuckey-French and Ned Stuckey-French. *Writing Fiction: A Guide To Narrative Craft*. 10th ed. University of Chicago Press, 2019.
 - c. DeMarinis, Rick. *The Art and Craft of the Short Story*. Open Road Distribution, 2016.
 - d. Jones, Amy. *Novel and Short Story Writer's Market 2020*. Writer's Digest Books, 2020.
 - e. Mills, Mark. *Crafting the Very Short Story: Anthology of 100 Masterpieces*. Prentice Hall, 2002.
- 2) Supplemental: None.

Exit Skills

Students having successfully completed this course exit with the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge:

- 1) Distinguish, both orally and in writing, the fundamental tools, techniques, and forms used by professional practitioners of short fiction writing, including plot construction, point of view, setting, description, characterization, dialogue, and theme.
- 2) Identify and employ basic techniques of invention.
- 3) Write short fiction utilizing fundamental tools, techniques, and forms.
- 4) Evaluate benefits of criticism of their own work and demonstrate application in consequent revisions.
- 5) Develop ability to critique other students' short fiction, both orally and in writing.
- 6) Cultivate aesthetic criteria for short fiction.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Create short fiction that employs the fundamental tools, techniques, and forms of the craft.
- 2) Use workshops and/or other review exercises to critically evaluate their own short fiction manuscripts as well as the manuscripts of others.